



## **R.I. nets \$9 million to cover health-care needs for children**

**Governor Carcieri suggests some of the money could go to continue state-paid health coverage for poor noncitizen children.**

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PROVIDENCE -- An extra \$9 million in federal funding for children's health insurance, promised by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, has come through, Governor Carcieri announced yesterday.

The money will come to Rhode Island from the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, through S-CHIP, or the State Children's Health Insurance Program. The additional funding represents Rhode Island's share of a redistribution of money allotted by the federal government to individual states in 2003. States have three years in which to spend each year's S-CHIP allotment. At the end of those three years, many states have unspent money, which the federal government then redistributes among states that have exhausted their original allotments, such as Rhode Island.

"I'm very pleased that Rhode Island will be receiving this unanticipated level of federal funding," Carcieri said in a news release. "I'm particularly happy that Secretary Leavitt and other federal officials were responsive to my concerns and agreed to distribute these funds in a way that is beneficial to Rhode Island."

Carcieri announced a verbal promise from Michael O. Leavitt, the Secretary of Health and Human Services, at a Rhode Island Kids Count breakfast earlier this month. At the breakfast, Carcieri suggested some of the money could go to continue state-paid health coverage for poor noncitizen children. Carcieri's budget proposal would save \$4 million by cutting an estimated 3,000 such children from the RItE Care rolls.

Asked yesterday whether that is still the use the governor has in mind for the money, Carcieri spokesman Jeff Neal said, "That's certainly one possibility. The governor thinks at this point we need to wait until we have a better picture of the budget as a whole." The state will revise its revenue projections within two weeks, and will have a better idea of the size of the deficit -- last estimated at \$300 million this year and next.

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